

DC COMICS

MARKED FOR DEATH!

THE

# SINISTER

JAMES  
**ROBINSON**  
CULLY  
**HAMNER**



RATED T+ TEEN PLUS

JAN 2012

dccomics.com

HARRIS 10



**DC COMICS**

**2**

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# **SHADE**

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[dccomics.com](http://dccomics.com)



"THE **ARROGANCE**  
OF DEATHSTROKE.

"UNMITIGATED GALL.

"I HAVE BEEN IMMORTAL SINCE  
1838. I HAVE FOUGHT DEMONS  
AND JEALOUS HUSBANDS, BRIDGE  
TROLLS AND RAZOR-WIELDING  
ICE CREAM VENDORS.

"STEAM-DRIVEN  
ROBOTS, PHANTOM  
EXECUTIONERS,  
ANGELS, DRAGONS  
AND DIVAS.

"NOT TO MENTION  
MY DUEL OF ACID  
AND SHADOW WITH  
THE 'SCOURGE OF  
THE ORIENT,' DR.  
LEI-SU YUNG.

"PFFT.

"A ONE-EYED ASSASSIN, WEIGHED  
DOWN BY CHAIN MAIL AND PRIDE,  
IS BUT A STROLL IN SPRING WHEN  
I CATALOGUE MY JOURNEY TO DATE.



"OF COURSE, DEATHSTROKE IS A FORMIDABLE CHAP.

"BUT I'VE FACED WORSE.

"TRUTHFULLY, I SENSED HIS PRESENCE MINUTES BEFORE HE MADE HIMSELF KNOWN.

"IN THE TREES, IN THE PARK, I STEPPED INTO SHADOW...AND A *FACSIMILE* OF MYSELF STEPPED OUT, SPEAKING WITH MY UBIQUITOUS APLOMB, BUT MADE OF *NOTHING* BUT THE DARKNESS THAT BRED IT.

"IT WILL FADE BACK TO NOTHING SOON.

# THOSE FIRST FEW STEPS

JAMES ROBINSON  
writer

CULLY HAMNER  
artist

DAVE MCCAIG  
colorist

TODD KLEIN  
letterer

TONY HARRIS  
cover

CULLY HAMNER  
variant cover

WIL MOSS  
editor

"AND I WILL NOT."





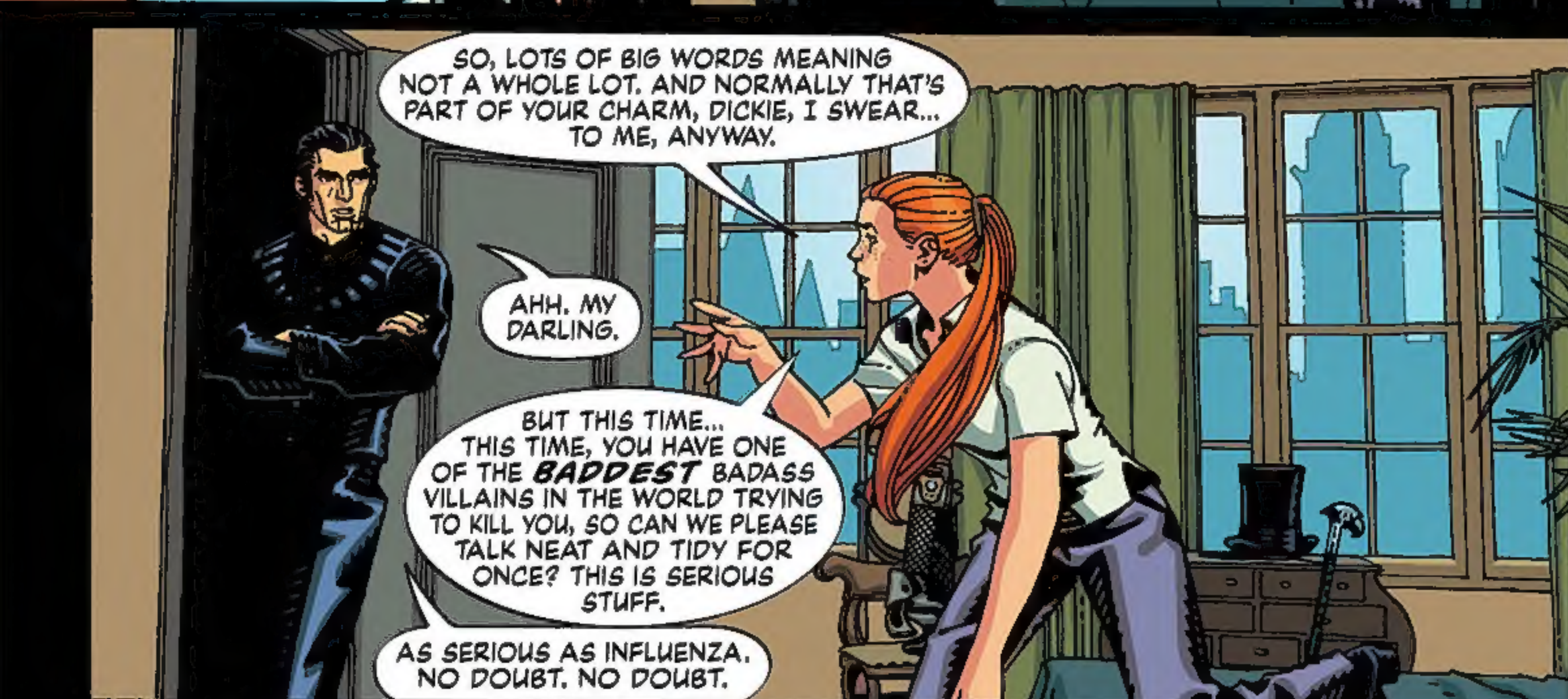
I UNDERSTOOD, LIKE, MAYBE EVERY **OTHER** WORD OF THAT LAST PART, BUT GO ON.



WELL FIRSTLY, IT WAS IRONIC THAT WE BOTH USED FETCHES; IT'S LIKE NEITHER OF US WERE EVEN THERE, IN A SORT OF EXISTENTIAL WAY...IF I CARE TO MUSE ON THAT KIND OF THING.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE CORRECT USE OF "IRONY"---

OR INDEED "EXISTENTIALISM," I'M SURE.



SO, LOTS OF BIG WORDS MEANING NOT A WHOLE LOT. AND NORMALLY THAT'S PART OF YOUR CHARM, DICKIE, I SWEAR... TO ME, ANYWAY.

AHH. MY DARLING.

BUT THIS TIME... THIS TIME, YOU HAVE ONE OF THE **BADDEST** BADASS VILLAINS IN THE WORLD TRYING TO KILL YOU, SO CAN WE PLEASE TALK NEAT AND TIDY FOR ONCE? THIS IS SERIOUS STUFF.

AS SERIOUS AS INFLUENZA. NO DOUBT. NO DOUBT.



WHICH IS **WHY** I'M HERE AT YOUR APARTMENT AND NOT AT MY OWN ABODE. THIS FOLLOWING ON FROM WHY I FAKED MY DEATH IN THE FIRST PLACE.

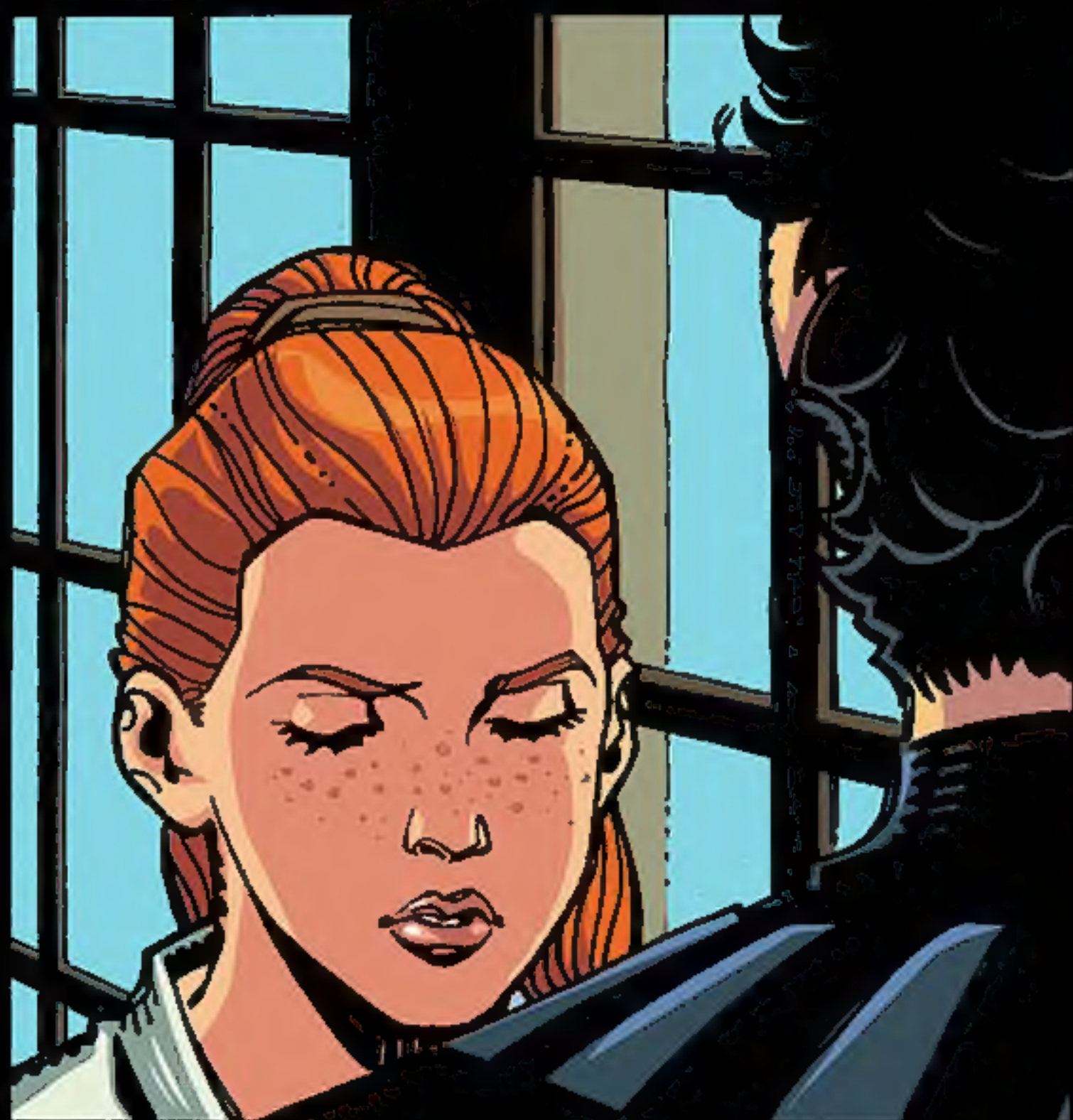
I **COULD** HAVE KILLED DEATHSTROKE. BUT THAT'S **ALL** I WOULD HAVE DONE.

IF I'D TORTURED HIM TO LEARN WHO HIRED HIM, HE WOULDN'T HAVE TOLD ME. NOT SLADE WILSON.



BUT AS DANGEROUS AS HE IS, IN THE END WILSON IS JUST THE AGENT FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S INTENTIONS.









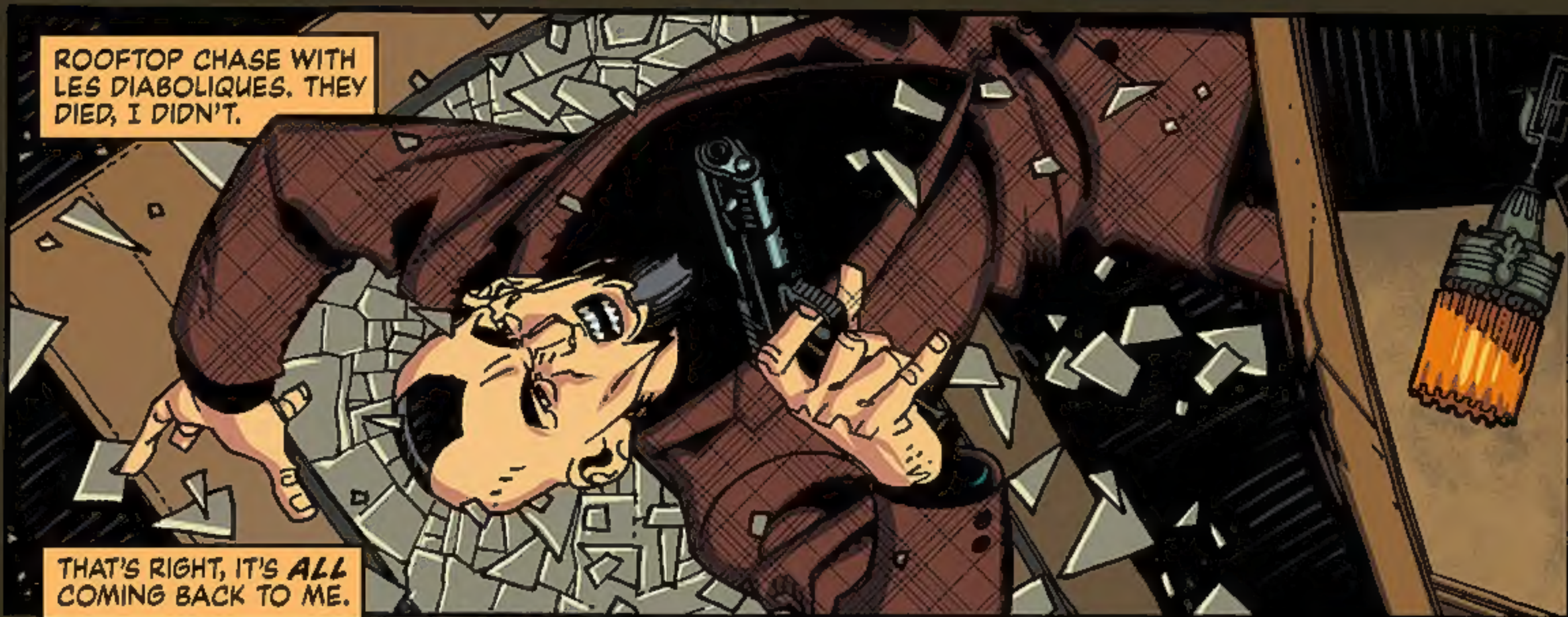




SO...



...WHERE WERE WE LAST TIME?



ROOFTOP CHASE WITH LES DIABOLIQUES. THEY DIED, I DIDN'T.

THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S **ALL** COMING BACK TO ME.



I WORRY ABOUT THAT, YOU KNOW...MEMORY. MY GRAND-FATHER, AS HE GOT OLDER, HE STARTED TO FORGET THINGS...NOT "ALZHEIMER'S FORGET," JUST "OLD MAN FORGET," BUT STILL...



...**THAT'S** THE SAD REALITY... AGE COMES FOR ALL OF US.



SO WHERE WERE WE? SEE, FORGETTING AGAIN.

I'VE GOTTEN WORD OFF THAT I HOPE WILL GET TO THE SHADE ABOUT THE **THINGS** THAT I'VE UNCOVERED.



PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT THOSE TIDBITS COMING TO LIGHT HAVE SENT **OTHERS** TO KILL ME AFTER LES DIABOLIQUES DIDN'T PROVE UP TO THE TASK.



LES DIABOLIQUES WERE BELGIAN. THESE NEW ONES ARE **FRENCH**. SOUTH. MARSEILLE. ROUGH BUNCH...

...BUT HONESTLY, THEY'RE NO TROUBLE...THUGS, SOME OF THEM TOUGH, SURE. TOUGH. BUT **NO MORE** DANGEROUS THAN LES DIABOLIQUES.



MY CURRENT PLAYMATE BEING A PRIME EXAMPLE.

NO...

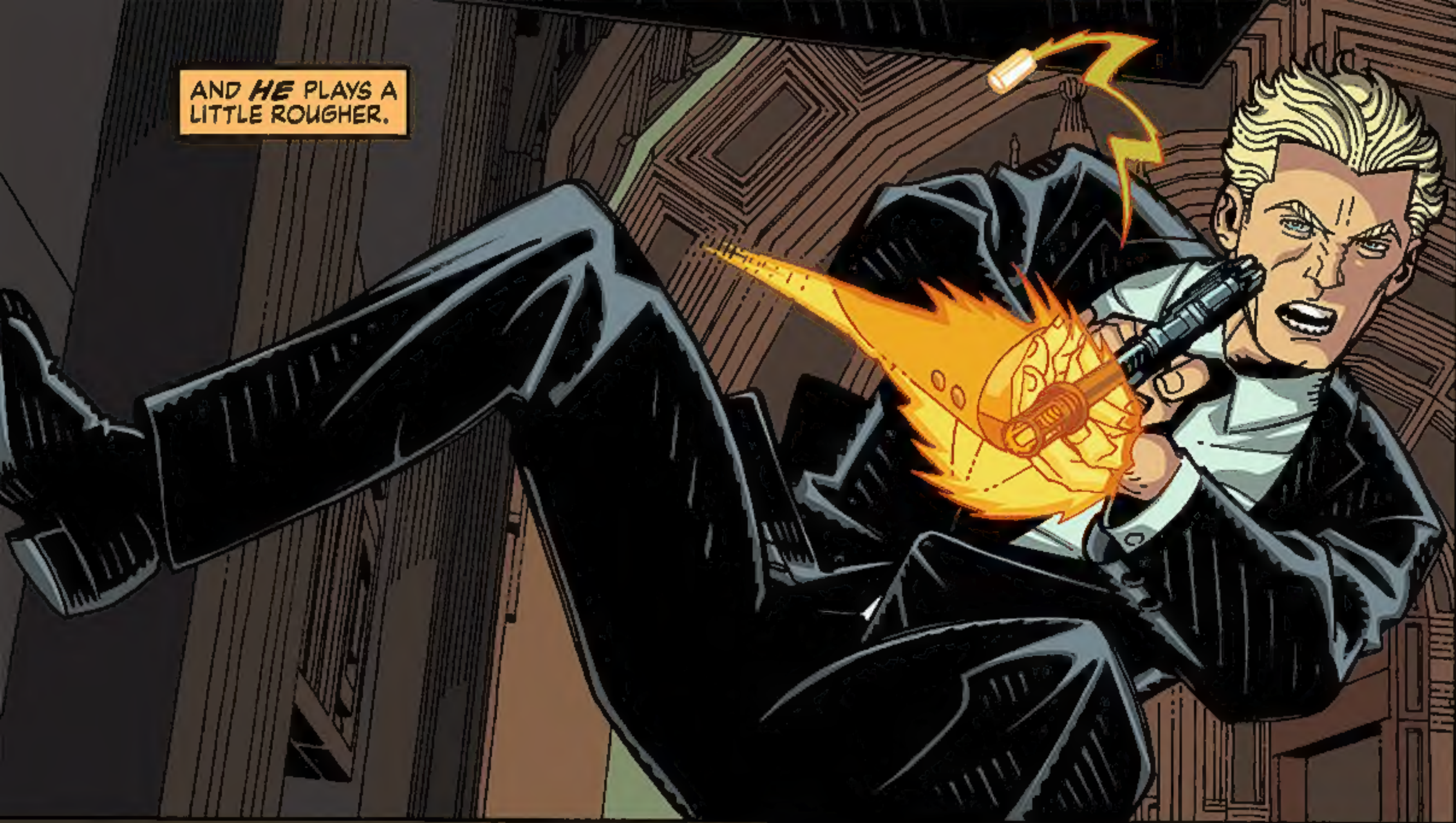
...IT'S THEIR **BOSS** THAT WORRIES ME.

WORD IS HE'S TAKING MY CONTINUED EXISTENCE PERSONALLY... THAT HE'S COMING TO GET ME HIMSELF.





AND *HE* PLAYS A  
LITTLE ROUGHER.



OH, AND FOR ALL OF  
YOU VISITING HAMBURG,  
GERMANY, FOR THE FIRST  
TIME, I'M SORRY...SHOULD  
HAVE INTRODUCED MYSELF.

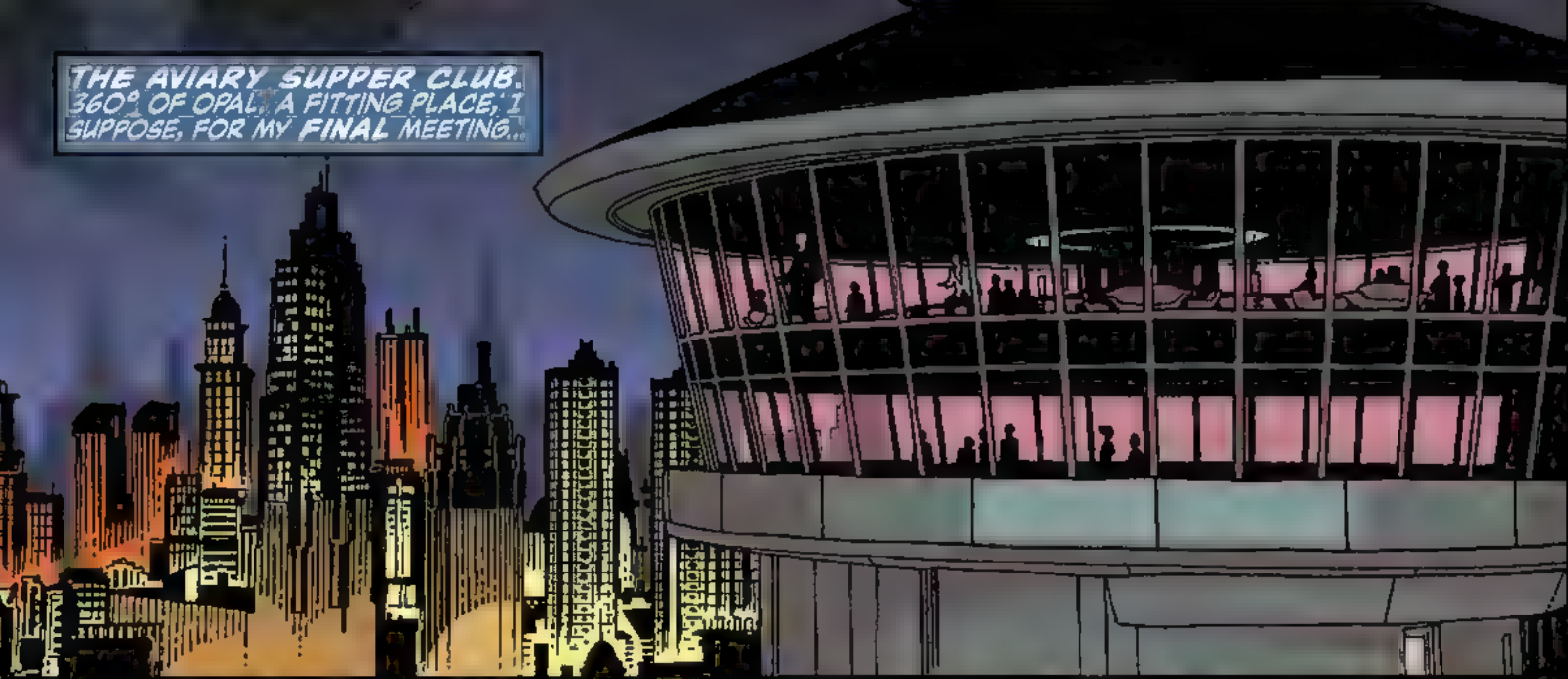
I'M WILL VON HAMMER,  
PRIVATE DETECTIVE AND  
A SEX MACHINE WITH  
ALL THE CHICKS.

(ACTUALLY I'M NOT,  
BUT I'VE ALWAYS  
WANTED TO SAY THAT.)





THE AVIARY SUPPER CLUB.  
360° OF OPAL, A FITTING PLACE, I  
SUPPOSE, FOR MY FINAL MEETING...



ONE FINAL PERSON  
TO SEE BEFORE I GO.



JAKE BENNETT,  
BETTER KNOWN BY  
HIS SOBRIQUET.

BOBO. A  
PLEASURE AS  
ALWAYS.

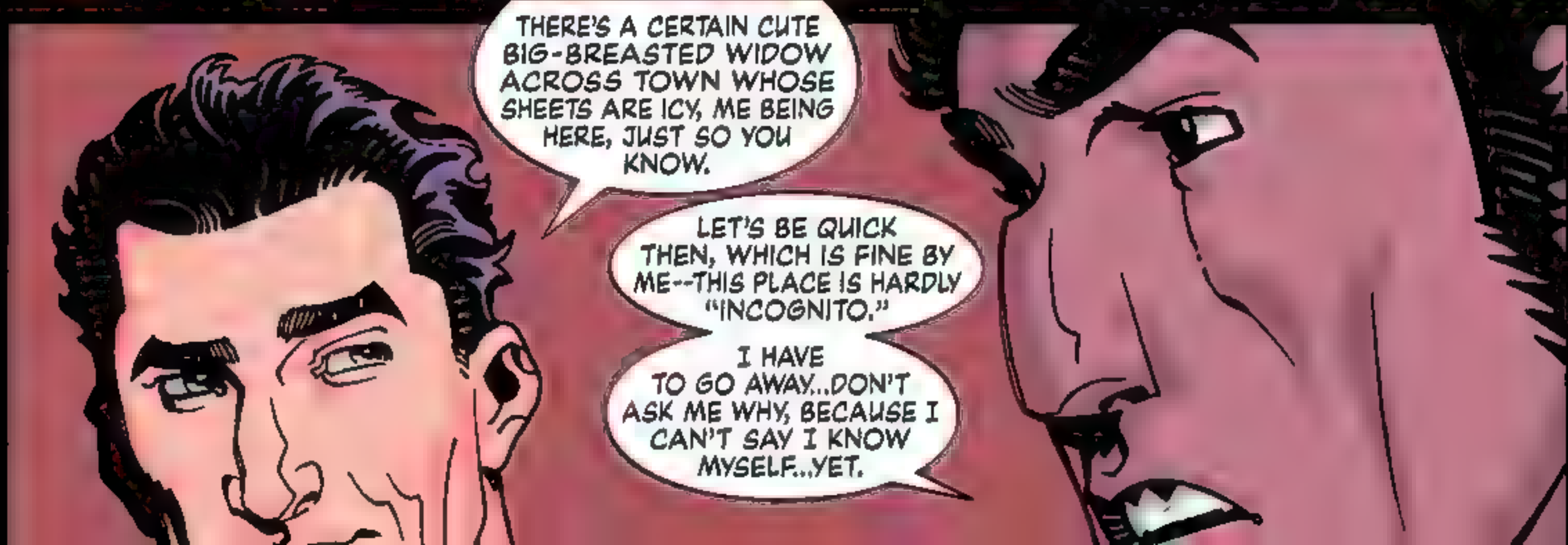
AND  
**ALWAYS** A  
PLEASURE BACK,  
BUDDY. GOTTA SAY,  
THOUGH, NOT THE  
BEST TIME FOR A  
MEET 'N' GREET.  
NOT FOR YOURS  
TRULY...



THERE'S A CERTAIN CUTE  
BIG-BREADED WIDOW  
ACROSS TOWN WHOSE  
SHEETS ARE ICY, ME BEING  
HERE, JUST SO YOU  
KNOW.

LET'S BE QUICK  
THEN, WHICH IS FINE BY  
ME--THIS PLACE IS HARDLY  
"INCOGNITO."

I HAVE  
TO GO AWAY...DON'T  
ASK ME WHY, BECAUSE I  
CAN'T SAY I KNOW  
MYSELF...YET.







I WANTED TO SEE YOU...  
TO ASK YOU...TO TAKE EXTRA  
CARE OF OPAL FOR ME, PLEASE.  
AND PLEASE, **PLEASE** KEEP  
A WATCHFUL EYE ON  
HOPE...

...BUT FOR  
GOD'S SAKE, DON'T  
LET HER KNOW--SHE'LL  
KILL ME.

AND ME,  
BROTHER. AND ME.  
I'LL BE OH SO ON THE  
DOWN BELOW.



AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO  
23 SKIDOO...DON'T SUPPOSE IT'S  
GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE  
BRIGHT RED TARGET ON THAT NICE  
BLACK SUIT OF YOURS?

AND **HOW**,  
PRAY TELL, WOULD  
YOU KNOW ABOUT  
THAT?

FUNNY THING...  
COINCIDENCE. COME  
MORNING I WAS GOING  
TO SEE YOU ANYWAY ON  
ACCOUNT I GOT A  
MESSAGE. HOUR AGO,  
MAYBE. HOUR AND  
CHANGE.

CAT I  
CROSSED PATHS  
WITH DURING A CRAZY  
CAPER IN MOROCCO A  
FEW YEARS BACK.  
VAMPIRE GIGOLO HIT  
MEN...DON'T ASK.



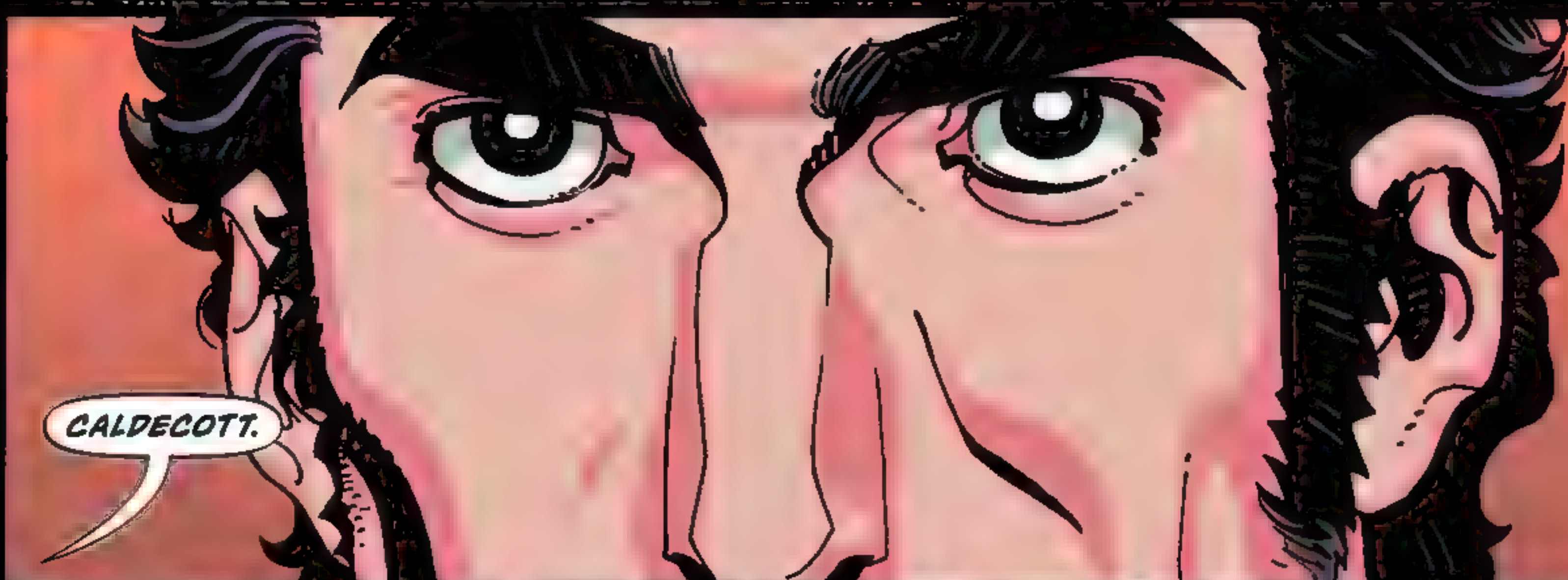
ANYWAY, THIS GUY CALLS ME,  
TRANS-AT, NO LESS...HAMBURG,  
GERMANY.

HE WANTS YOU TO  
KNOW THAT SOMEONE WANTS  
YOU **DEAD**. SAYS HE KNOWS  
**MORE**, BUT YOU HAVE TO  
GO SEE HIM.



SAYS THERE'S A NAME  
YOU'LL KNOW...INVOLVED  
IN ALL THIS.

NAME?



CALDECOTT.



WHERE DO HOTELS FIND THEIR SHEETS  
AND FURNITURE AND ART FOR THE WALLS?  
WHAT OASIS OF "SAME" DO THEY ALL RIDE  
THEIR CAMELS UP TO?

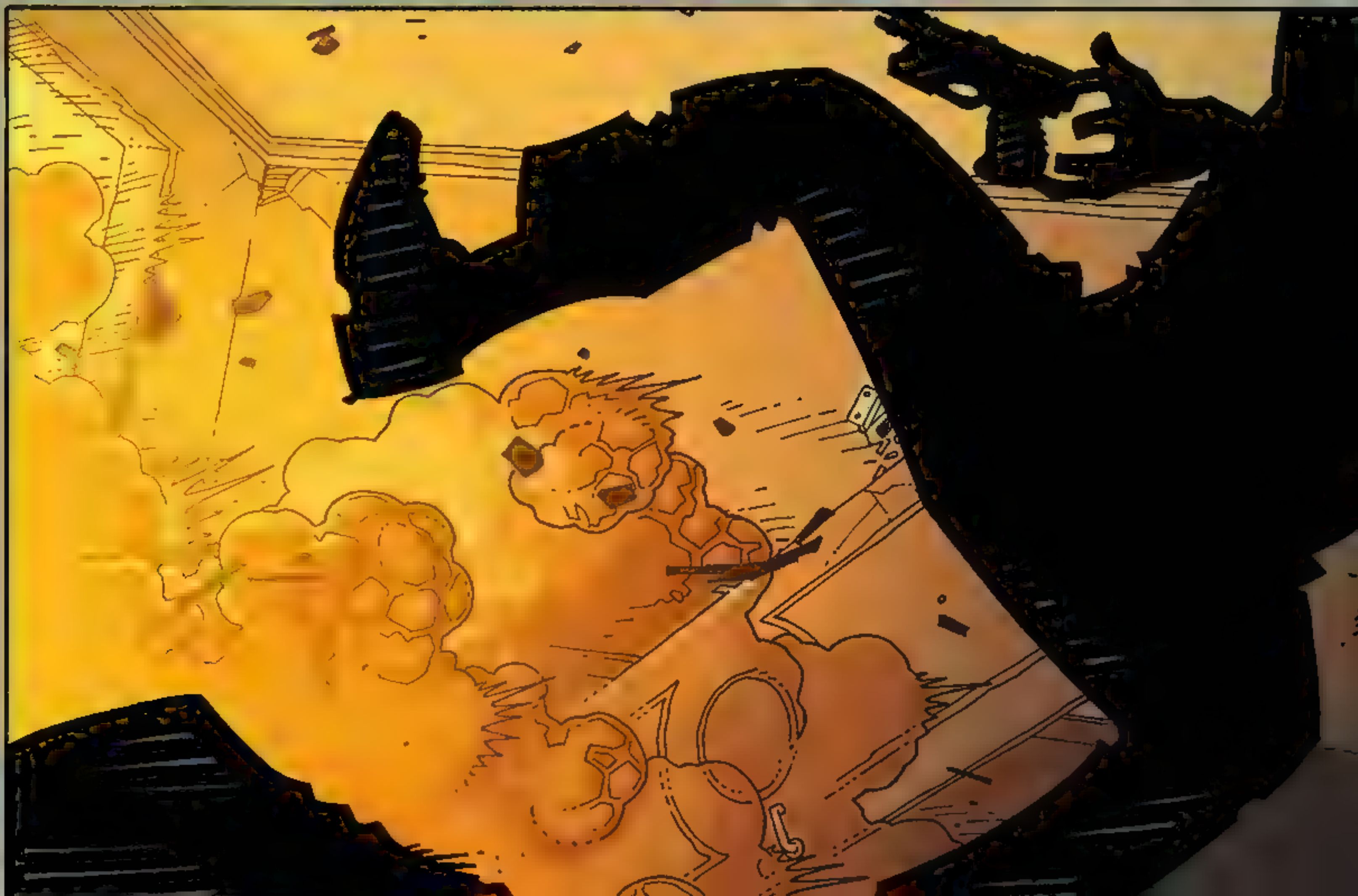
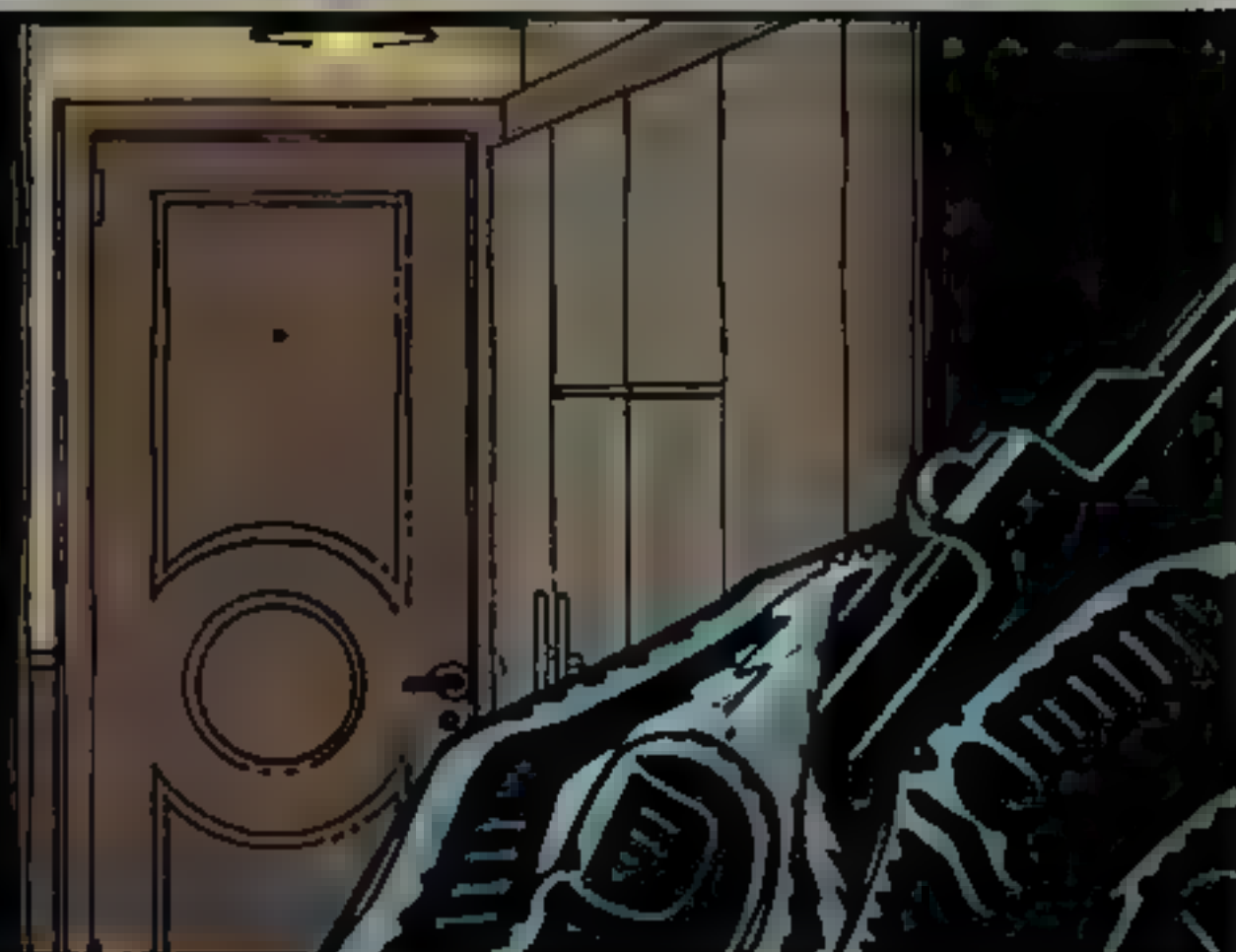
I THINK SUCH THOUGHTS  
AS I CLEAN MY GUN AND  
LISTEN TO ZERO 7.

AND LIKE THEIR LYRICS, I HAVE "GONE TO  
GROUND." I MIGHT **INDEED** HAVE BEEN  
"WATCHING PORN" IN A "DRESSING GOWN"  
TOO IF THE HOTELS DIDN'T CHARGE SO  
MUCH FOR ADULT FILMS. AND THE FACT IS,  
I MAY GET ATTACKED AT ANY MOMENT,  
SO DRESSING GOWNS ARE OUT OF THE  
QUESTION.



YES, I'M  
HIDING OUT.

THE FRENCH MOB  
BOSS I SPOKE OF  
HAS ARRIVED IN  
TOWN, AND THE  
HUNT FOR ME IS  
ON, SO I'M--







BONJOUR.  
VON HAMMER,  
non? yes?  
no?



UM...  
YES.

AND I'M GOING  
TO TAKE A WILD STAB IN  
THE DARK, NO PUN INTENDED,  
AND GUESS YOU'RE  
**BETE-NOIRE.**

YOU KNOW,  
THERE ARE SOME--MANY,  
IN FACT, WHO'D BE HONORED  
THAT I AM THE ONE TO  
TAKE THEIR LIFE.

YEAH?  
ME, NOT ONE  
OF THEM.



I DON'T  
SUPPOSE BULLETS  
HAVE ANY EFFECT  
ON YOU?

THEY  
IRRITATE ME. I  
FEEL MY INTELLIGENCE  
IS BEING INSULTED.  
WHY?

Err...NO  
REASON.



ANYTHING  
ELSE TO SAY?

MAY I  
STRAIGHTEN MY TIE  
BEFORE--?



non.

:COUGH:

...I KNOW  
WE'RE KINDRED  
"SHADOW" SPIRITS  
AND ALL...

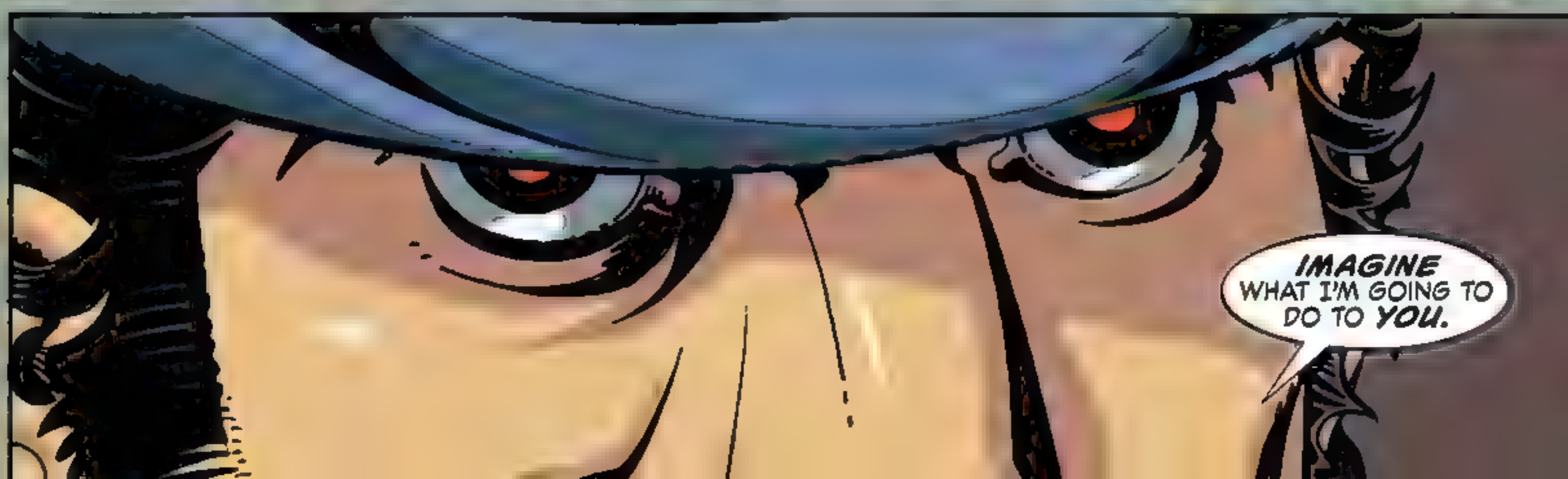




...BUT I **HAVE**  
TO SAY, BETE-NOIRE,  
YOU ARE A BORE  
AND A BULLY.



I'VE KILLED  
PEOPLE FOR BEING  
ONE OR THE OTHER IN  
THE PAST, DID YOU  
KNOW THAT?



**IMAGINE**  
WHAT I'M GOING TO  
DO TO **YOU**.





I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS! THE MIGHTY SHADE! SO "POWERFUL"! SO "SHADOW-STRONG"! WE WILL SEE!

ENGLISH! I HATE ON YOU!

YES, FRENCH MAN, AND SOAP, TOO, ACCORDING TO PUBLIC CONSENSUS.

IT'S REASSURING...HOW SOME XENOPHOBIC DISDAINS APPARENTLY NEVER DIE,

ME...



...I MAKE SURE I'M NOT SOON TO DIE EITHER.



I KNOW...



...IT ALL SEEMS RATHER CUTTHROAT.



BUT LOOK AROUND!

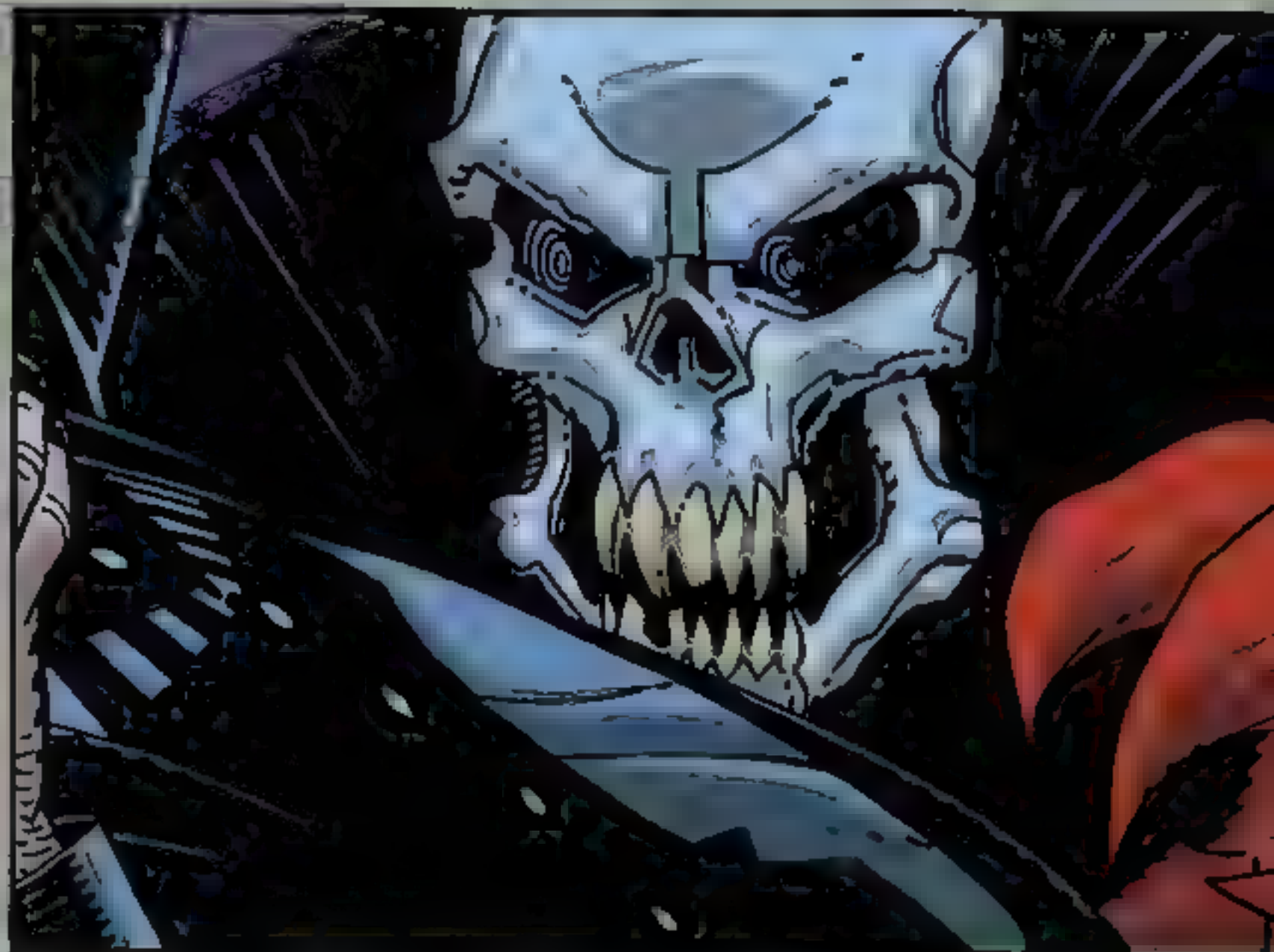




MY WORLD...



...AND THAT OF THE SHADE, TOO, I'M GUESSING...



DEBATE AND  
COMPROMISE?

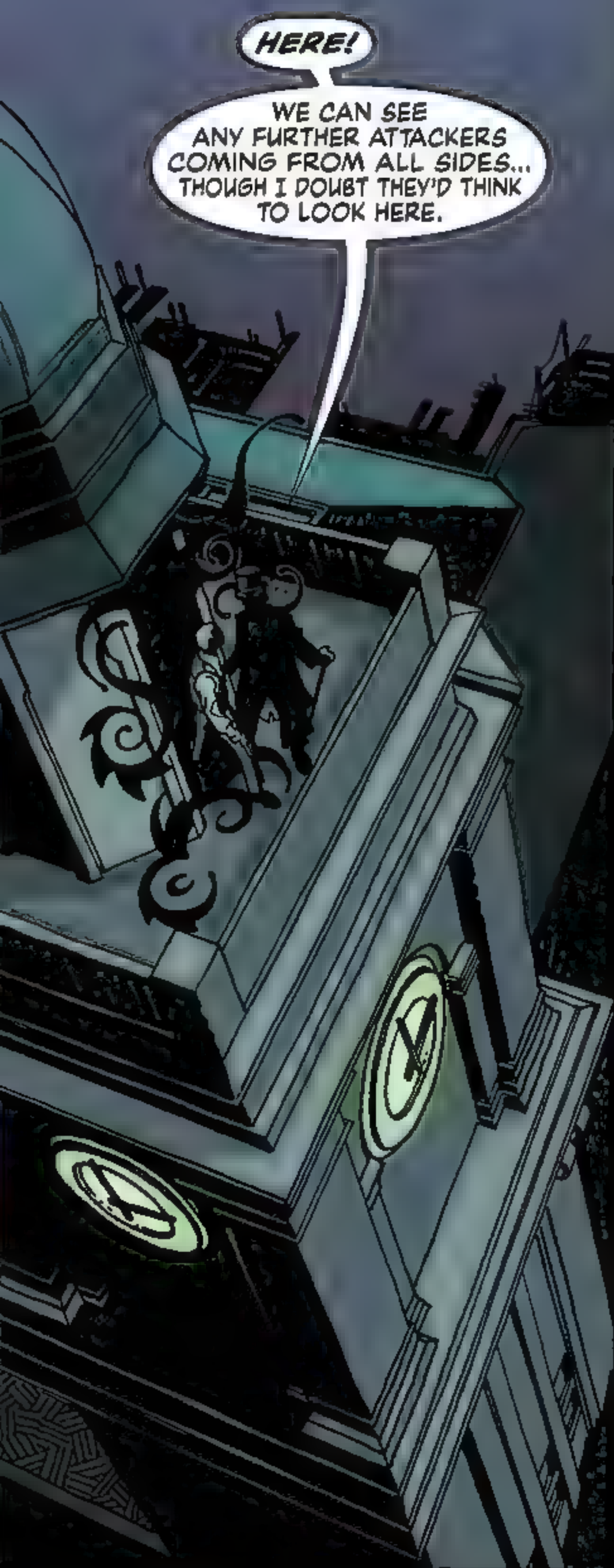


SCANT  
WIGGLE  
ROOM.









HERE!

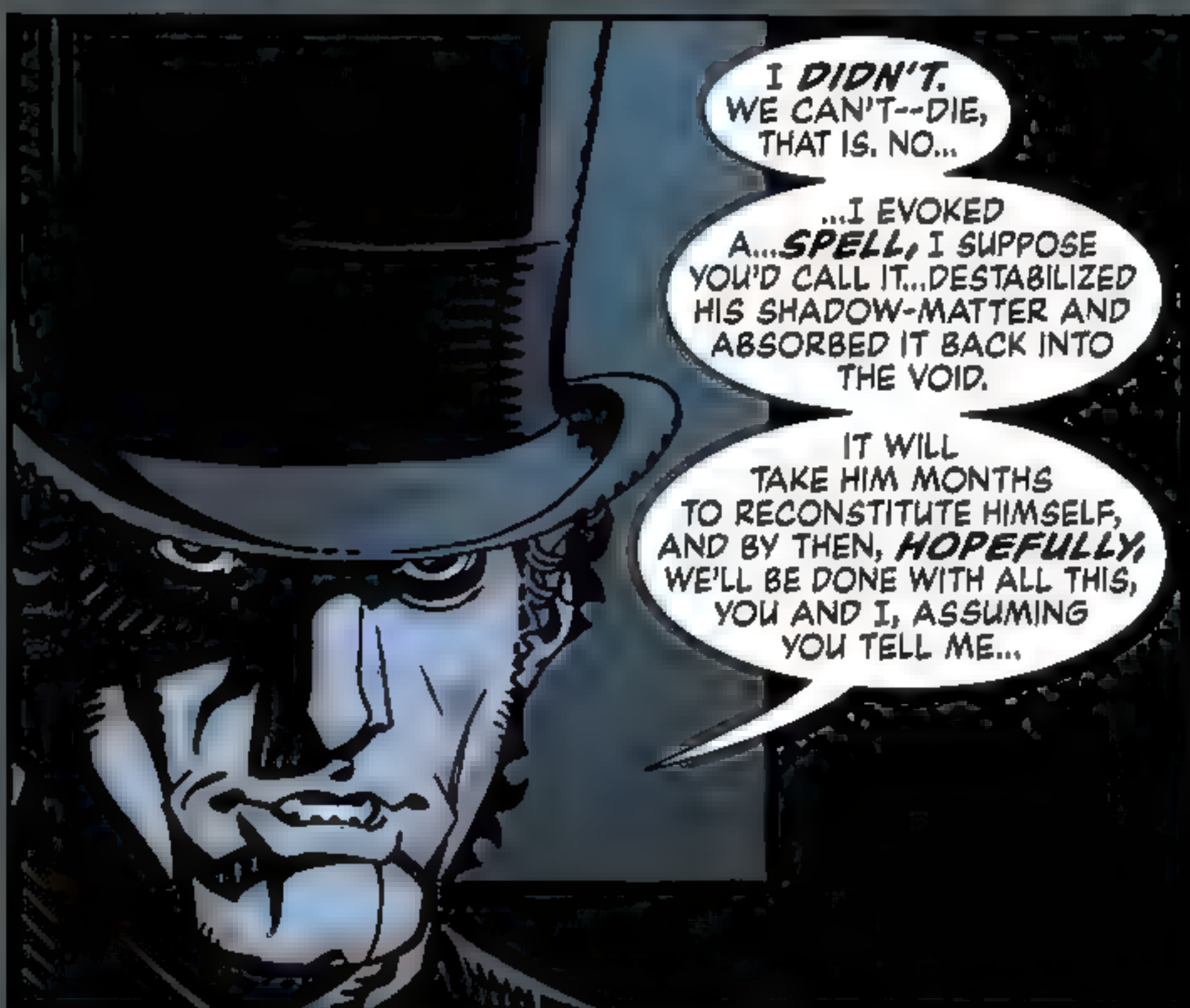
WE CAN SEE ANY FURTHER ATTACKERS COMING FROM ALL SIDES... THOUGH I DOUBT THEY'D THINK TO LOOK HERE.



SO YOU DID IT?

"IT"?

KILLED BETE-NOIRE. **HELL** OF A THING. HONESTLY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU SHADOW TYPES COULD DIE.



I **DIDN'T**. WE CAN'T--DIE, THAT IS. NO...

...I EVOKED A...**SPELL**, I SUPPOSE YOU'D CALL IT...DESTABILIZED HIS SHADOW-MATTER AND ABSORBED IT BACK INTO THE VOID.

IT WILL TAKE HIM MONTHS TO RECONSTITUTE HIMSELF, AND BY THEN, **HOPEFULLY**, WE'LL BE DONE WITH ALL THIS, YOU AND I, ASSUMING YOU TELL ME...



...**WHAT** IN GOD'S NAME **ALL** THIS **IS**. SIMPLY TOLD, NOW.

WELL, I KNOW OF YOU...HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM JAKE BENNETTI DURING AN EXPLOIT--

YES, GIGOLO HIT MEN...VAMPIRES, NO LESS...YES, YES, **DO** GET TO IT.







BOY, YOU ARE NOT THE FUN-LOVING FELLOW I IMAGINED.

OH, I'M CHUCKLES A-PLENTY. BUT **NOT** TONIGHT--I FEAR A MIGRAINE. COME. SPEAK. SCHNELL.

VERY WELL...



I WAS HIRED TO FIND OUT IF THERE WERE ANY SAMPLES OF YOUR **BLOOD** STILL IN EXISTENCE.



MY BLOOD?

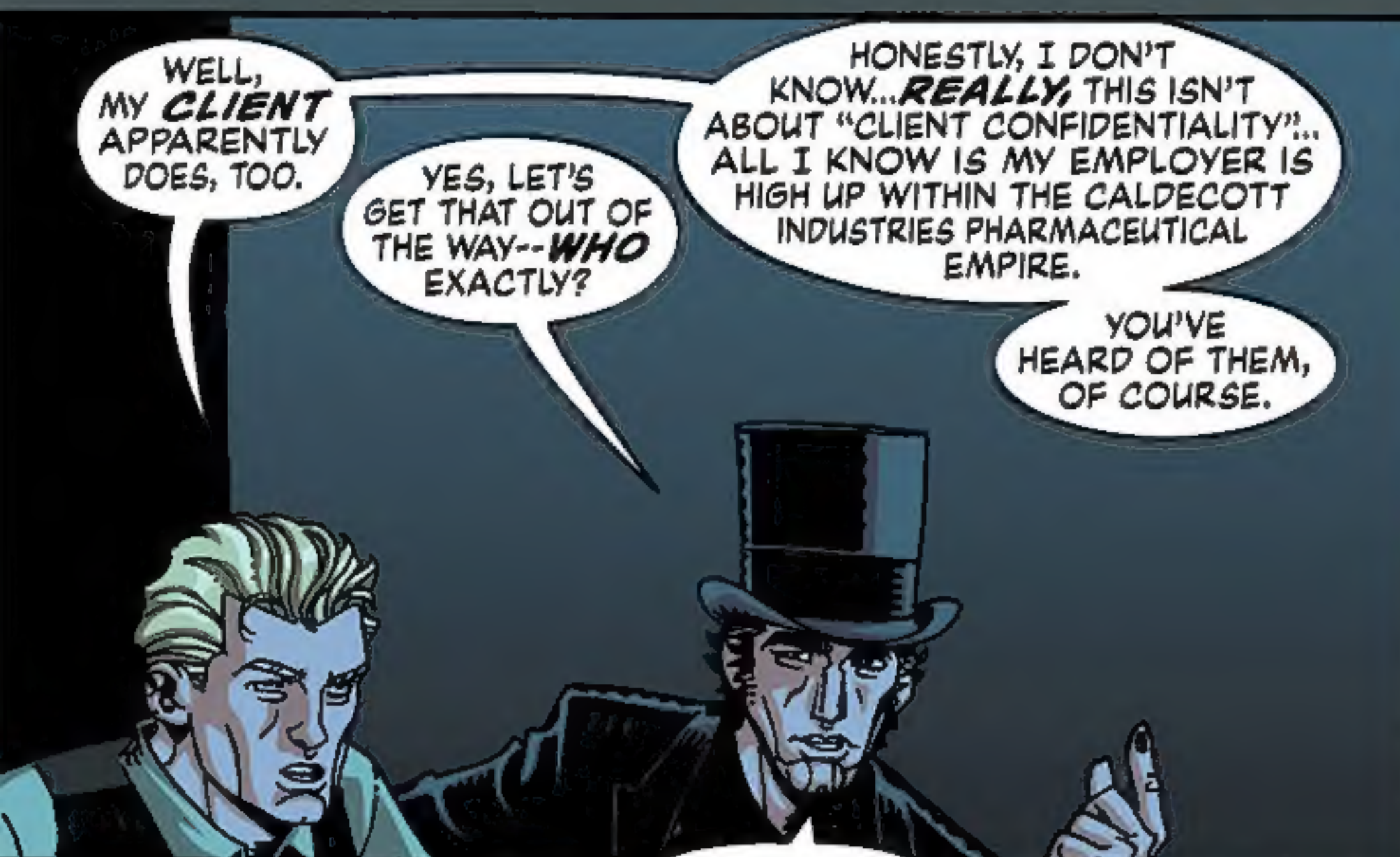


WELL, YES, I KNOW--YOU DON'T HAVE BLOOD ANYMORE, RIGHT? NOT **REAL** BLOOD. YOUR BODY'S **CHANGED** OVER THE YEARS.

YES. BY THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, THE LAST VESTIGES OF MY HUMANITY WERE GONE. BLOOD, TOO. ALL OF IT LOST TO SHADOW-MATTER.

THOUGH I MUST SAY, THAT'S VERY SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE--AS IN... I THOUGHT **I** WAS THE **ONLY** ONE WHO KNEW IT.





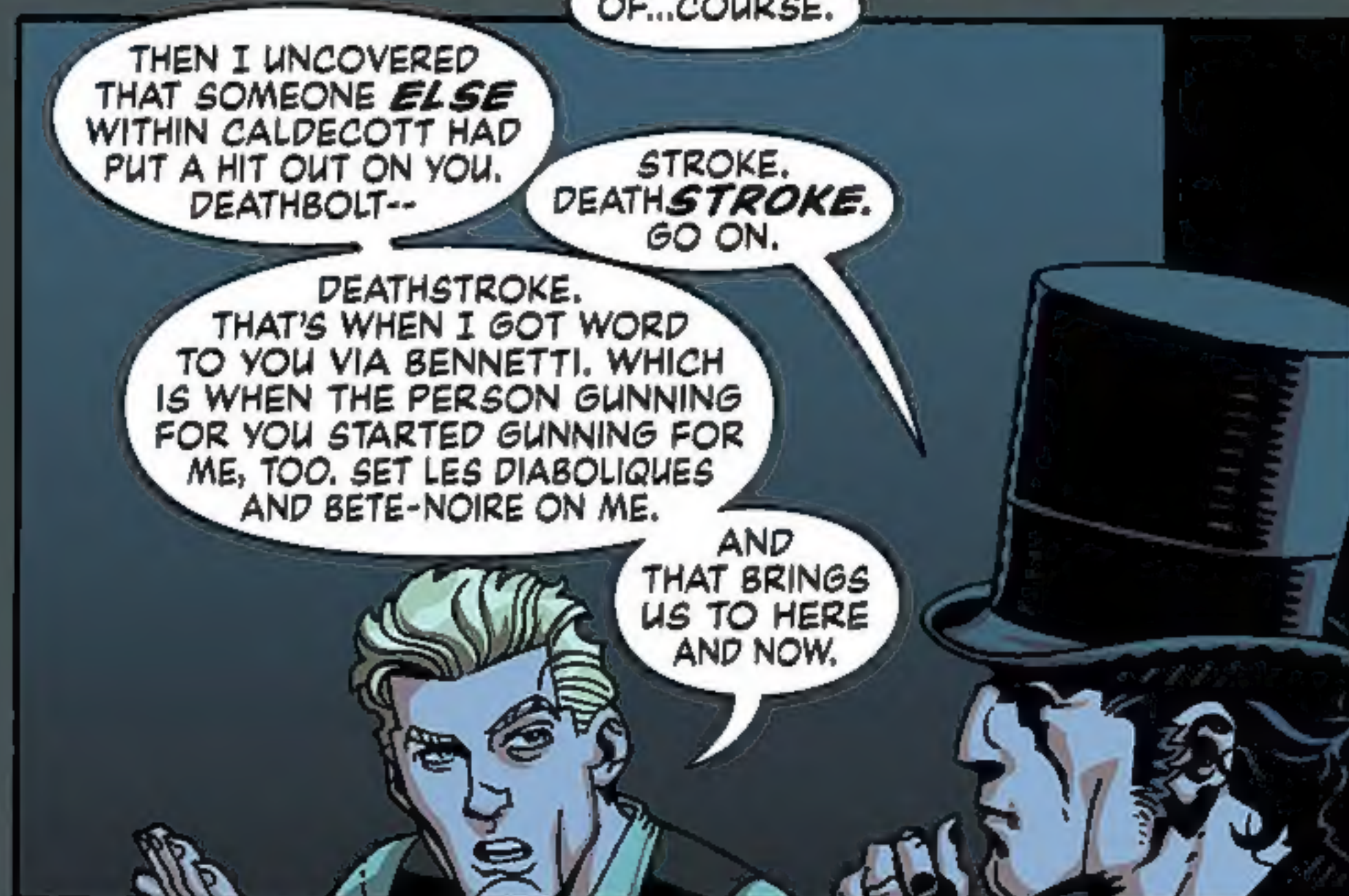
WELL, MY **CLIENT** APPARENTLY DOES, TOO.

YES, LET'S GET THAT OUT OF THE WAY--**WHO** EXACTLY?

HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW...**REALLY**, THIS ISN'T ABOUT "CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY"... ALL I KNOW IS MY EMPLOYER IS HIGH UP WITHIN THE CALDECOTT INDUSTRIES PHARMACEUTICAL EMPIRE.

YOU'VE HEARD OF THEM, OF COURSE.

OF...COURSE.

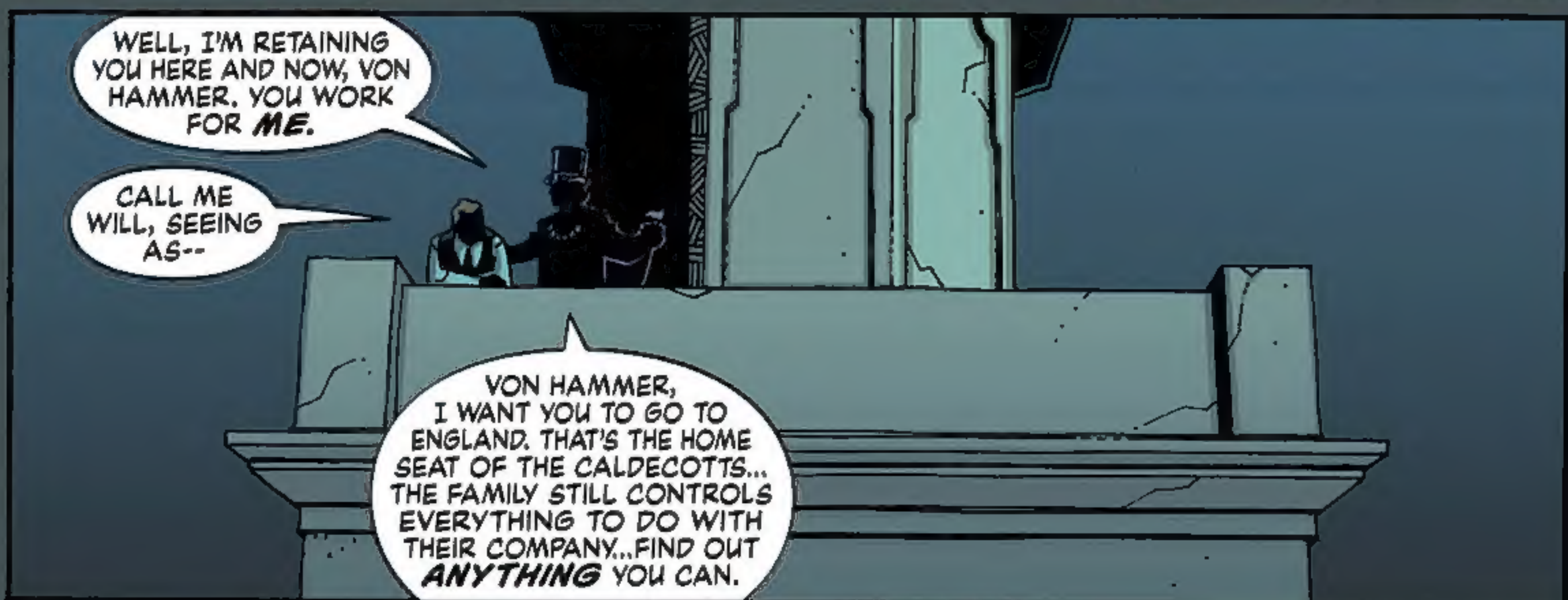


THEN I UNCOVERED THAT SOMEONE **ELSE** WITHIN CALDECOTT HAD PUT A HIT OUT ON YOU. DEATHBOLT--

STROKE. DEATH**STROKE**. GO ON.

DEATHSTROKE. THAT'S WHEN I GOT WORD TO YOU VIA BENNETTI. WHICH IS WHEN THE PERSON GUNNING FOR YOU STARTED GUNNING FOR ME, TOO. SET LES DIABOLIQUES AND BETE-NOIRE ON ME.

AND THAT BRINGS US TO HERE AND NOW.



WELL, I'M RETAINING YOU HERE AND NOW, VON HAMMER. YOU WORK FOR **ME**.

CALL ME WILL, SEEING AS--

VON HAMMER, I WANT YOU TO GO TO ENGLAND. THAT'S THE HOME SEAT OF THE CALDECOTTS... THE FAMILY STILL CONTROLS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THEIR COMPANY...FIND OUT **ANYTHING** YOU CAN.



SURE. NEXT PLANE. BUT WHAT ABOUT **YOU...?**



"...WHERE ARE  
**YOU** GOING?"

**AUSTRALIA.**

HE'LL BE  
HERE SOON, I  
SENSE IT.

UNAVOIDABLE.  
INEVITABLE.

I WILL BE  
READY!

Next:  
There's No Shade  
In The Outback



FROM THE WRITER OF SUPERMAN &  
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

**JAMES  
ROBINSON**

with **TONY HARRIS**

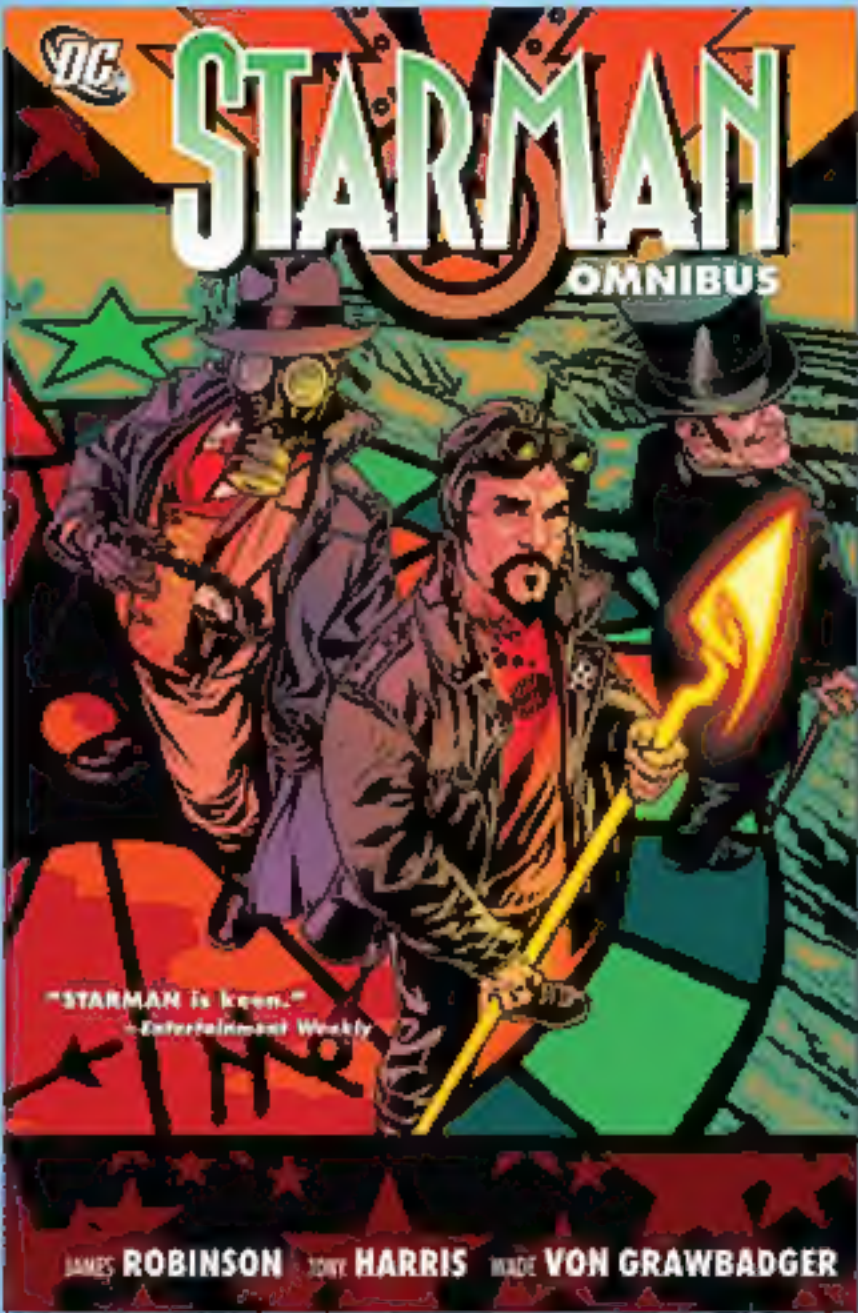
*"The best-written superhero in comics."*  
- ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

*"What'll make THE STARMAN OMNIBUS  
resonate with newcomers...is how well  
[James] Robinson and [Tony] Harris  
articulated the character of Jack Knight,  
a slacker with idiosyncratic tastes and ideals that  
didn't originate in any corporate boardroom."*  
-THE ONION

- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 1
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 2
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 3
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 4
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 5



STARMAN OMNIBUS  
VOL. 2



with  
**TONY HARRIS**

STARMAN OMNIBUS  
VOL. 3



with  
**TONY HARRIS  
& others**

STARMAN OMNIBUS  
VOL. 4



with  
**TONY HARRIS  
& others**

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